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SUBJECT: EU STUDY PRESENTS MIXED PICTURE OF AUSTRIAN TURKISH
INTEGRATION

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¶1. (U) Summary: An EU study on minorities released December 9 gives a mixed picture of Austria's Turkish community. The results indicate that ethnic Turks face less discrimination in Austria than in other EU countries with substantial Turkish immigrant communities. At the same time, however, Austrian Turks lag behind their brethren in other EU countries in terms of education, employment, and language proficiency. End Summary.

¶2. (U) The study, compiled by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, includes data on a range of minority groups across the EU. The survey was limited to minorities comprising at least 5 percent of the national population. Turkish communities in Austria, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Bulgaria were included. Immigrants to Austria from the former Yugoslavia were also covered in the study.

Austrian Turks Face Less Discrimination...

¶3. (U) The results indicate that ethnic Turks are less likely to face discrimination in Austria than in any other EU country with a substantial Turkish minority except Bulgaria. The Bulgarian Turks, unlike the other groups in the survey, comprise an established, non-immigrant community virtually all of whom are Bulgarian citizens. Austrian Turks say they face fewer incidents of discrimination in their daily life than their brethren in Germany, Denmark, Belgium, and the Netherlands.

¶4. (U) Specific data on discrimination include:

-- 9 percent of Austrian Turks say they have suffered discrimination in the past 12 months, compared to 42 percent in Denmark and 30 percent in Germany and the Netherlands.

-- 6 percent of Austrian Turks say they have been stopped by the police over the past 12 months, compared to 28 percent in Denmark and the Netherlands and 24 percent in Germany.

-- 27 percent of Austrian Turks believe their ethnicity or religion hinders advancement in the workplace; in the Netherlands, 80 percent of Turks said their ethnicity was a hindrance and 68 percent said their religion was. In Belgium and Denmark a majority also said both their ethnicity and religion hindered advancement at work.

-- Ethnic Turks were more likely to report discrimination to police/other authorities in the countries where discrimination was more common, and less likely in the countries where it was less common. In Austria and Bulgaria, 5 percent of the incidents of discrimination against Turks were reported, compared to 24 percent in Denmark and 22 percent in the Netherlands.

...But Lag in Other Areas

15. (U) At the same time, however, the study indicates that Austrian Turks lag behind their brethren in other EU countries when it comes to employment, education, and language proficiency. Results from the study include:

-- 50 percent of Austrian Turks have held paid jobs in the last five years, the lowest percentage among Turkish groups in the study. The highest rate was recorded among Danish Turks, 82 percent, followed by Dutch Turks, 69 percent.

-- 52 percent of Turkish women in Austria are homemakers or engaged in unpaid work, by far the highest percentage in the survey. The second highest proportion was among Belgian Turks, at 33 percent.

-- 5 percent of Turks in Austria and Germany had completed 14 or more years of education, the lowest proportion among the countries in the survey. In Austria, one third of Turks had completed 5 years of education or less, or had not enrolled in school at all. The most educated Turkish community was in the Netherlands, where 30 percent had completed at least 14 years of education.

-- 53 percent of Austrian Turks interviewed for the survey were fluent in German, the lowest level of language proficiency among the Turkish communities. The highest level was among the Belgian Turks, 81 percent of whom were fluent in French.

-- 8 percent of Turks in Austria have been in the country for less than five years, the highest proportion of any country in the survey. The overall average was 3 percent.

Comment: Ominous Signs for Future

16. (SBU) It is encouraging to see that Turks in Austria today

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apparently face relatively little discrimination in their daily lives. However, other results from this study indicate the community is lagging in all areas essential to a better future. Turks will not manage to integrate into Austrian society if they fail to break the cycle linking poor German language skills, low academic achievement, and limited employment prospects. It is possible that Austrian Turks fare relatively poorly in these areas in part because so many of them are new immigrants. But it is unlikely that the mere passage of time will resolve the problem, as social and structural hurdles requiring government and civil society action by the majority community must also be addressed.